

Message Text

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51

ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SAM-01 SAB-01 DPW-01 IO-14 DRC-01 /110 W

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R 231430Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8557

INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR, EG

SUBJECT: GAMASY ANSWERS QUESTIONS FROM VISITING EXPATRIATES

1. CAIRO PRESS (ALL LANGUAGES) GAVE EXTENSIVE PLAY AUGUST 22 TO A MEETING WHICH LT. GENERAL MUHAMMAD ABD AL-GHANI AL-GAMASY, CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE ARMED FORCES HELD WITH A GROUP OF VISITING EGYPTIAN EXPATRIATES FROM THE US. GAMASY ASSURED THE VISITING EXPATRIATES THAT THE ARMED FORCES ARE VIGILANTLY WATCHING THE ENEMY ACTION AND ARE READY TO RESUME FIGHTING SHOULD POLITICAL EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH PEACE IN THE AREA NOT SUCCEED. GAMASY POINTED OUT THAT EGYPTIAN FORCES ARE CAPABLE OF CARRYING ON OPERATIONS ON THE EAST BANK OF THE WATERWAY QUICKLY AND EFFICIENTLY SINCE THE CANAL IS NO LONGER A BARRIER AND THE BAR LEV LINE IS IN RUINS. GAMASY SAID THAT THE STATE OF ALERT OF THE ARMED FORCES NOW EXCEEDS THAT WHICH EXISTED ON OCTOBER 6 AND THAT THEY ARE WATCHING CLOSELY THE MOVES BY THE ENEMY WITH REGARD TO TRAINING OR PARTIAL MOBILIZATION.

2. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS GEN. GAMASY GAVE FOLLOWING REPLIES:

(A) RE HIGH DAM AS PART OF PREPARATION FOR OCTOBER WAR - THE ARMED FORCES HAD DRAWN UP DEFENSE PLANS FOR THE HIGH DAM, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE MINISTRY OF IRRIGATION TO PROTECT THE

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COUNTRY FROM WATERS OF THE HIGH DAM IF BREACHED BY ENEMY AIR

ATTACKS.

(B) RE HAIFA OIL REFINERIES - EGYPTIAN ARMED FORCES WERE READY TO STRIKE "IN DEPTH OF ENEMY TERRITORY" IF THE ENEMY HAD ATTACKED EGYPTIAN CIVILIAN TARGETS. PRESIDENT SADAT, HOWEVER, MADE THE DECISION NOT TO ATTACK CIVIL TARGETS LIKE THE HAIFA REFINERIES BECAUSE MANY CIVILIANS WOULD HAVE BEEN KILLED.

(C) RE TREASON IN THE ISRAELI CROSSING OF THE CANAL - NO OFFICER OR SERVICEMAN WAS BROUGHT TO TRIAL BECAUSE OF NEGLIGENCE OR TREASON DURING THE WAR. RUMORS WHICH HAD CIRCULATED ABROAD THAT A MILITARY MAN HAD BEEN EXECUTED FOR TREASON CONNECTED WITH THE ISRAELI BULGE ARE FALSE.

(D) RE ISRAELI LOSSES DURING THE WAR - ACCORDING TO US SOURCES ISRAEL LOST 8,000 KILLER; 22,000 WOUNDED; 1,000 TANKS; AND 2,000 AIRCRAFT.

(E) RE QUESTION ON ISRAELIS CROSSING THE CANAL - EGYPTIANS DID NOT BUDGE FROM THEIR POSITION BUT IT WAS THE ENEMY WHICH WAS SHAKEN BY ITS EXPERIENCE WITH EGYPTIAN RESISTANCE AND DECIDED NOT TO CONTINUE BECAUSE OF THE GREAT LOSSES SUFFERED.

(F) RE EGYPTIAN AIR FORCE PERFORMANCE DURING THE WAR - AIR FORCE PILOTS FLEW A RECORD SEVEN SORTIES PER DAY PER PILOT INSTEAD OF THE USUAL THREE WHICH FORCED THE ENEMY TO DEVOTE 50 PERCENT OF ITS SORTIES TO DEFENSE.

(G) RE NAVAL PERFORMANCE - THE CLOSING OF BAB AL-MANDAB IS SUFFICIENT TO SPEAK OF THE SUCCESS OF THE NAVAL FORCES.

(H) RE TROUPS BEHIND ISRAELI LINES - SHOCK TROUPS (COMMANDOS) CARRIED OUT OPERATIONS DEEP BEHIND ISRAELI LINES AND REMAINED 20 DAYS IN THE EAST AFTER THE CEASE FIRE. THEY ALL RETURNED SAFELY AND DESERVE OUR APPRECIATION. (IMPLICATION IS THAT THEY WERE CAUGHT BY CEASE-FIRE AND DID NOT CARRY OUT OPERATIONS AFTER CEASE-FIRE.)

(I) RE WAR PRISONERS - ISRAELIS WERE SURPRISED TO SEE THEY WERE NOT SLAUGHTERED WHEN THEY WERE TAKEN PRISONER. ONE ARMORED BRIGADE COMMANDER, ASSAF YAGOURI, ASKED TO VISIT JEWISH FAMILIES IN EGYPT AND WAS ALLOWED TO DO SO. AFTER HIS TOUR HE COMMENTED THAT HE HAD BEEN THE VICTIM OF UNTRUE PROPAGANDA FROM HIS SUPERIORS AND INTENDED TO TELL OF GOOD TREATMENT OF JEWISH PERSONS IN EGYPT ON HIS RETURN.

3. COMMENT: IN TONE AND SUBSTANCE GAMASY'S ANSWERS ARE SURPRISINGLY MODERATE AND FACTUAL DESPITE CURRENT EGYPTIAN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MILITARY UNEASINESS PROMPTED BY REPORTS OF ISRAELI/SYRIAN TENSIONS, AND POSSIBLE ISRAELI REINFORCEMENT OF THEIR SINAI FORCES AND EGYPTIAN ARMY'S OWN INCREASED ALERT. THEY WERE APPARENTLY INTENDED FOR A PARTICULAR AUDIENCE, PERHAPS WITH A VIEW TO OBTAINING WIDER DISSEMINATION IN THE US.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, ARMED FORCES, MOBILIZATION, WAR
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 AUG 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: boyleja
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974CAIRO06484
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740233-0864
From: CAIRO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740824/aaaaatvk.tel
Line Count: 113
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: boyleja
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 AUG 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <14-Aug-2002 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <03 MAR 2003 by boyleja>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GAMASY ANSWERS QUESTIONS FROM VISITING EXPATRIATES
TAGS: PFOR, EG, (AL-GAMASY, MOHAMMED ABDEL GHANT)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005